

Alamo Area Experience Plan Update

Vision

1. Engage visitors in ways to personally connect to the Alamo area experience.
2. Tell the story of the Battle of the Alamo and its impact on the Republic of Texas, City of San Antonio, State of Texas, and the United States.
3. Include and interpret the diverse cultures that contributed to the story of the Alamo area through meaningful and memorable experiences for visitors.
4. Tell the in-depth history of the Alamo area as a tribute to all who lived, fought, and died there.

Guiding Principles

1. 1836 is the entry point
2. Unified leadership under the management of a single steward (public and private) with a sustainable business model
3. Preservation and interpretation of evidence-based features
4. Access: intellectual , experiential and physical
5. Balance: scholarship, historical context, visitor experience
6. Sustainability: social, economic and environmental impact
7. Premier Visitor Experience: physical space and interpretation
8. Embrace the continuum of history, understanding and healing
9. Connectivity and wayfinding: the river, neighborhoods, La Villita, the cathedral, the other Plazas

Themes and Goals

The Alamo Plaza Advisory Committee has reviewed and updated the 1994 Alamo Plaza Study Committee's Report and recommends the following updates to the 1994 themes and goals for the Alamo area experience. The themes are based on the research that has been conducted as well as the recommended Vision and Guiding Principles for the Alamo area experience.

Each of the four themes is followed by Primary and Secondary goals that will be included in the overall program planning for the plaza.

Primary (Impact)

1. Include a document that gives the background information on the more than 300 years of history of the Alamo Plaza site.
2. Create a glossary of terms for common reference.

3. Create a unified foundation or organization for the management of the public (city, state, federal) and private interests of the Alamo area experience.
4. Develop a Master Plan and an Interpretive Plan.
5. Develop an initial Interpretive Plan simultaneously with the Master Plan. Update scholarship and technology regularly through the Interpretive Plan every 5 years.
6. Develop and implement an integrated and coordinated way finding, interpretive, and directional signage plan for the Alamo area experience and the Alamo Plaza Historic District. Interpret the Alamo so visitors understand its location on the battlefield.
7. Include strict guidelines in the Interpretive Plan for appropriate experiences in the Alamo experience area addressing street preachers, food and other vendors, street performers, living history interpreters and special events to ensure top quality visitor experiences.
8. Develop and implement a comprehensive transportation, circulation, and parking plan to accommodate accessibility while exerting minimal negative impact on the visitor experience in the Alamo area.
9. Provide an exceptional visitor experience while considering all points of view and a comprehensive interpretation of the Alamo area.
10. Consider the World Heritage Site nomination and designation. Be sure the Alamo area experience Master Plan recommendations do not jeopardize the process and potential designation.

Secondary (Long-term Strategy)

1. Make sure infrastructure and way finding plans are inclusive of all types of visitors, broadly accessible and flexible.
2. Develop a strategy to orient visitors to the stories and context before they experience the Alamo compound. Provide information and services to facilitate the visitor experience.
3. Creatively separate commercial areas from battleground areas through visual cues and interpretation.

THEME A: The evolution of settlements and cultures around the Alamo area

Goal 1. Tell the story of the environment and the Native Americans

- a) San Antonio is located just below an escarpment that cuts across the state and joins a semi-arid region to the southwest and a fertile plain to the east. The area was a meeting and gathering place as well as home to different groups of Native Americans.
- b) Native American groups of the area:
 - remains have been found that date Native Americans in this area to 8,000-10,000 years ago
 - nomadic and followed seasonal food sources, were hunters and gatherers of food, not farmers
 - subsisted on wild game, nuts, berries and other fruits as food sources
 - traveled in small bands or groups
 - built jacales as dwellings
 - made basketry
 - had the San Antonio River, creeks and springs as abundant water sources
 - met with other Native Americans at San Pedro Springs to trade and for Mitotes/gathering/ceremonies
 - the region was called the sacred word Yanaguana
 - area Native American groups were attacked often by the Apache
 - were known to seek protection within the mission from outside attacks-as did other people in the area
 - became part of the expanding Spanish Empire when the Indian missions and later towns/pueblos were established
 - the towns/pueblos had an appointed Native American government that included Governor, Mayor, Constable, etc., as conferred by the *Auto de Posesión*
 - were mission-dwellers who farmed and ranched on the frontier to survive and thereby expand the Spanish Empire,
 - were converted to Christianity---the primary goal of the Spanish missionaries
 - were willing to live in the mission, be Christianized and take Spanish names while still maintaining a connection to Native culture
 - mastered the skills and trades that the missionaries introduced while incorporating native symbols and colors in the designs

Goal 2: Tell the story of the Spanish influence and settlement, including the three types of towns: Indian-Led Mission Towns/Pueblos, the Soldier/Settler Town, and the Civilian Town

- a) The introduction of the horse by the Spanish led to the culture of the vaquero and the cowboy. The area of San Antonio was settled to protect New Spain against French encroachment from Louisiana. Spanish Texas would always serve as a defensive frontier on the edge of the Empire. Once the Crown sponsored-establishments were founded, settlers began to pursue their own goals and objectives rather than those of the Empire.

Spain established Indian missions that became **Indian-led mission towns/pueblos** as a means of expanding the Empire. These towns/pueblos had an appointed Native American government that included Governor, Mayor, Constable, etc. This was conferred by the *Auto de Posesión*. The primary goal of the Spanish missionaries was the conversion of the Native Americans. To survive and expand, mission dwellers developed farms and ranches on the frontier.

Residents of the **soldier-settler towns** (called presidios or military garrisons) often relied more on the local economic base, farming and grazing, rather than on their military pay.

The settlers in the **civilian town** of San Fernando de Béjar immigrated to Texas under the sponsorship of Spain. They originally relied heavily on the rights conferred to them by the Spanish Crown, but in time they too searched for security and economic improvements over imperial Spain's objectives.

b) Define and provide context for:

- Definition of the Military Plan
- define the terms Spanish, Mexican, Tejano, Bexareño, Texian
- who is identified as Mexican
- secularization fostered Mestizos/ Mestizaje
- the first families of the area
- Spanish colonization that brought converging goals of church and crown – building missions, churches and schools
- establishment of civil governments
- establishment of Spanish archives to file their deed records and wills
- protection for the missions with the establishment of the Presidios, establishment of law and order in the region
- Porciones (define land measurements by today's standards)
- new techniques of farming, raising cattle and horses, the impact of clearing large areas of brush and trees to establish farming land
- introduction of domesticated animals (cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, chickens, oxen)
- the Spanish way to trade, traded with Spanish money
- introduction of a new language
- changes and influences regarding architectural styles
- built roads
- made carts and wagons to haul products
- established new businesses and stores
- the San Antonio River for drinking water, washing clothes, acequias to channel water for animals and farm land
- impact of new diseases, small pox and others
- hospitals and new medicine

Goal 3: Tell the story of the Mexicans, the settlement by Americans and other Texian immigrant cultures, and the coming of the Revolution

a) From Spanish to Mexican and American Texas

- recognize the founder of San Antonio–Fray Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares
- Spanish Mission secularization
- San Antonio society in transformation-mission to presidio to town to now a city
- Mexico's immigration policy
- Tejano, Italian, Irish, German united by the common Catholic religion

b) San Antonio and the Mexican War of Independence

- the De las Casas Revolt

c) San Antonio and the Texas Revolution

- the Westward Movement (economic links to the US)
- confidence in US support-money, arms, volunteers
- the rise of Centralist power (cutting ties with US)

- civil war becomes revolution (from autonomy and self-determination to independence)

d) United States policy

- Manifest Destiny
- Monroe Doctrine
- Andrew Jackson and the west
- Southern designs for Texas, the expansion of slavery
- problems with Annexation in 1836
- President James A. Polk designs for California

e) Westward movement of the diverse immigrants to America

- population growth
- immigration—include the range of diverse groups
- German, Italian and Mexican settlers came together as Catholics
- farmers growing crops
- links to active national and international market
- governmental support
- Louisiana Purchase
- Northwest Ordinance
- US policy of removal of Native Americans

f) The diversity of Texians the American settlers brought:

- new languages
- new ideas on how to farm
- new religions
- banking industry
- new politics
- new money
- new English laws
- new streets
- new ways of transportation
- new businesses
- better water systems inside the home
- new record keeping, court records
- established factories, industry
- new food items: sodas, baked goods
- city parks and recreation
- new schools
- better protection for the river from pollution
- new voting system
- demolished old buildings and built new ones
- installed paved sidewalks

THEME B: Tell the story of the 1836 Battle of the Alamo

Goal 1: Present the politics of the Texas Revolution

The visiting public of all ages will gain an understanding of the political forces at work leading up to and during the Texas Revolution from September 1835 to June 1836. The known six political factions will be stressed and their leading spokesman identified (through primary source materials) to give visitors a sense of the political and emotional turmoil which split families and friendships during the Texas Revolution. Include politics and policies surrounding the Native American population-Native Revolution/Manifest Destiny/Politics. Include the Mexican perspective of what the battle of the Alamo was about--Mexicans believed Texas and other territories were stolen.

a) The political factions to explore were:

Federalist: supported the Mexican Constitution of 1824, desired Mexican Statehood for Texas separate from its union with Coahuila, sought to overthrow the centralist dictatorship of President Antonio Lopez Santa Anna, and opposed annexation to the United States

Centralist: supported the dictatorship of President Antonio Lopez Santa Anna and opposed further immigration from the United States

Republican/Independence: sought an independent Republic of Texas separate and apart from both Mexico and the United States

Annexationist: sought an immediate annexation of Texas to the United States through purchase or war as part and parcel of the US Manifest Destiny and the extension of slavery as an economic base

Lone Star Conspiracy: composed primarily of former followers of US Vice President Aaron Burr (Burr Conspiracy), US General James Wilkinson (Spanish Conspiracy), or the All Mexico Club. This group was composed primarily of US, Texas, and Northeastern Mexico frontiersmen who favored the creation of a third North American Republic between Mexico and the United States.

Neutralist: lost in the political turmoil of the Revolution, a great number of American colonists and Tejanos quit the Federalist Volunteer Army of Texas after the removal of Stephen F. Austin, or remained neutral throughout the ordeal.

Goal 2: Provide background to set the stage for the Battle: September 1835 to February 22, 1836

- a) Pueblo San Antonio de Valero is transformed from an agrarian community to a military garrison as the area residents are literally pushed out from around the Alamo Compound and surrounding area
- b) communities of Villa de Béjar and Pueblo de Valero at the outbreak of the Texas Revolution
- c) early Battles in and around Bexar County at Mission Concepción, the Grass Fight and the Siege of Béjar from October to December of 1835
- d) Alamo Compound transformed from an abandoned mission, community plaza, and cemetery to a fortified military site
- e) Mexican Army fortification of the Alamo compound and immediate area before and during Siege of Béjar

- f) Continuation of military improvements under Col. James Neill (December 1835 through February 1836)
- g) The 1836 Alamo Battlefield
 - defenders' artillery emplacements within the Alamo Compound
 - defenders' primary and secondary defensive positions
 - Mexican Artillery emplacements around the Alamo Compound
 - Mexican Infantry staging area
 - Mexican Cavalry positions
 - Mexican Reserves
 - Mexican battle logistics and order of the day
 - Mexican assault routes by commands
 - known sites where individuals died (primary source materials or evidence-based)
 - surviving Alamo Garrison combatants
 - surviving Alamo Garrison non-combatants
 - Mexican impressions of the assault by participants
 - recollections of local eyewitnesses (from primary source materials)
- h) The Battle in Retrospect
 - casualties: inside and outside the Alamo walls Mexican Army of Operations in Texas: tactics and objectives after the fall of the Alamo
 - memorializing the Battle: the Fall of the Alamo becomes a battle cry
 - evidence-based interpretation, incorporating ongoing research and scholarship interpreting the Battle of the Alamo in the context of demographics and with cultural sensitivity

Goal 3: Provide ways to understand the geography of the battlefield site

- a) Visitors of all ages will gain an understanding of the physical space, geography and context of the Alamo compound, Villa de Béjar, Camino Real and Texas in 1836 through a planned interpretive strategy and visitor experience program that provides visual and intellectual context for the site, including the interpretation of important geography and locations:
 - Native American and mission cemeteries and burial grounds
 - the topography and geography of the Alamo Compound in relation to the Villa de Béjar, acequias, wells, cemetery, field, housing, etc.
 - the physical structures and layout of the Alamo compound
 - Béjar in 1836 Texas

Goal 4: Be Inclusive in telling all sides of the military story

- a) Tell the story of the Battle of 1813 and how it set the stage for the 1835/36 revolution and the Alamo story. Include the story of the people living in the area who did not participate in the 1836 battle and why. Include the background story of the Companias Volantes, expand story of Tejanos supporting revolution, the Volunteer Army of Texas, and the Mexican Army of Operations in Texas.
 - provide context for visitors to understand the daily lives of volunteers, soldiers and camp followers including uniforms, equipment, food, music and medicine
 - interpret the Mexican pioneer story, present the point of view of Mexico and what the revolution and battles meant from the Mexican perspective
 - provide evidence-based content and context for role of the women and children as eyewitnesses

- provide evidence-based content and context for the role of the African Texans as eyewitnesses, combatants and non-combatants
- include Alamo survivors and their roles as combatants and/or couriers
- the Texian Army in February and March of 1836 as it relates to possible reinforcements, supplies and communications

Goal 5: Tell the story of the local population's participation and reaction to the battle

- a) visitors of all ages will understand the impact of participation and the reaction of the local population of Béjar and the surrounding area to the Texas Revolution and the Battle of the Alamo
- b) provide context and interpretation for the following:
economic and social impact: What did Tejanos/Native Americans stand to lose ecologically, socially, and culturally
- c) the emotional impact of the fall of the Alamo as reflected through correspondence, journalistic accounts, military and government reports on both sides
- d) the impact of the fall of the Alamo as it caused many volunteers to enlist
- e) the political impact in the 19th and 20th century of the fall of the Alamo as it set the stages of the US-Mexico War and acquisition of the Southwest US
- f) the Alamo Compound as an early tourist attraction
- g) the creation of the Alamo myths

THEME C: The Alamo area is a place of remembrance

Goal 1. Recognize all cultures and events in the Alamo area have contributed to the history of the Alamo area experience

- a) Include the perspectives of Native Americans, Spaniards, Mexicans, Canary Islanders, Presidio Soldiers, African Americans, and Mexican Americans in the interpretation of the history of the Alamo area .

Goal 2. Regard the Alamo area with reverence and as a tribute to all who lived, fought, and died there

- a) Native Americans who lived in the area
 - b) the Mission led Indian Settlement
 - c) Pueblo San Antonio de Valero
 - d) Tejanos, Bexareños, Texians
 - e) Spanish Military
 - f) Mexican Military
 - g) American Military
- a) Along with information on those that died at the Battle of the Alamo, interpretive information will include:
- the traditional location for cemeteries was in front of the church, the Campo Santo was in front of the existing Alamo church the Campo Santo originally used by the Coahuiltecan Bands, Coco, Karankawa, Apache, Comanche, and other Native Americans subsequently buried at Mission San Antonio de Valero
 - interpret the story behind the Campo Santo—death rites, who, when, where
 - the significance and importance to the story of the Canon law that non-Catholics could not be buried in a Campo Santo

Goal 3: Provide background and context for the fight for self-determination (self-rule)

- a) Include background on the political implications of the struggle and the sacrifice by Alamo defenders, Mexican soldiers, Tejanos, Bexareños and others affected by the battle.

THEME D: The Alamo area experience represents a continuum of urban development and commerce in San Antonio

Goal 1. Interpret what the Alamo area looked like over the different periods of the more than 300 year history of the Alamo area and its relationship to other sites, other missions and related features.

Include:

- a) the Yanaguana/pre-mission period
- b) Mission Period (1720-1794)
- c) secularization of the mission, shops opened in the structures of the west and south sides of the Plaza
- d) evolution and expansion of the civil settlement
- e) related sites and features such as: the Campo Santos, La Villita, the Camino Real, ranching, farming, acequias, the barrios to the north and south, the Barrio de Valero and Laredito
- f) Tejanos: 1813-- 1st Independent Texas, discuss Tejanos self-determination need for freedom and independence
- g) Spanish Military Period (1801-1821)
- h) Mexican Military Period (1821-1836)
- i) Republic of Texas Period (1836-1845) Include Tejano families living outside the walls in the story of the Alamo
- j) American Military Period (1845-1880)
- k) the beginning of urbanization (1880-1900)
- l) involvement of governmental, historical and preservation organizations: Texas State Historical Association, General Land Office, Texas Historical Commission, Camino Real de las Tejas Association
- m) a respectful gateway to the Alamo site

Goal 2. Interpret how the Alamo area experience has transformed over more than 300 years and how it continues to be a community gathering place

- a) Include Native American history, pre-mission and mission periods, secularization, the communities, entertainment and retail surrounding the Plaza and the beginnings and continuation of urbanization.